

Message Text

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ACTION AID-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 CIAE-00

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0442

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, EAID, UK, XF

SUBJECT: THE IMPACT OF THE ARAB BOYCOTT ON FOREIGN
ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

REF: STATE 84891

1. FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE AND OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY OFFICIALS ADVISE THAT, AFTER INVESTIGATING RECENT HISTORY THEY FIND NO EVIDENCE THAT ARAB BOYCOTT REGULATIONS HAVE IN ANY WAY INFLUENCED BRITISH ASSISTANCE PROJECTS IN THE ARAB WORLD. BRITISH CROWN AGENTS NORMALLY HANDLE BIDDING FOR AID PROJECTS. BRITISH OFFICIALS CAN ONLY SPECULATE THAT FIRMS DO NOT BID IN SOME CASES, THOUGH THEY ALSO NOTE THAT APPLICATION OF BOYCOTT REGULATIONS IS PATCHY AT BEST, THUS IMPLYING POSSIBILITY THAT SOME BIDS MAY GO THROUGH EVEN THOUGH FORMALLY INELIGIBLE UNDER ARAB BOYCOTT REGULATIONS.

2. HMG IS ON RECORD OPPOSING BOYCOTTS NOT SANCTIONED BY THE UNITED NATIONS, THOUGH IT DOES NOT SPECIFICALLY ADDRESS THE ARAB BOYCOTT AS SUCH. TYPICAL STATEMENT IS FOLLOWING MADE IN HOUSE OF COMMONS IN DECEMBER 1974 BY PETER SHORE, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE: "HMG DEPLORES
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ALL TRADE BOYCOTTS OTHER THAN THOSE INTERNATIONALLY SUP-

PORTED AND SANCTIONED BY THE UNITED NATIONS. THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT SEEK TO ADVISE FIRMS HOW THEY SHOULD ACT IN ANY PARTICULAR CASE SINCE THIS IS A MATTER FOR THE COMMERCIAL JUDGMENT OF THE FIRM CONCERNED."

3. ALMOST IDENTICAL STATEMENT WAS MADE BY PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY DEAKINS OF DEPARTMENT OF TRADE ON FEBRUARY 17, 1975. IN REPLY TO FURTHER QUESTION WHETHER DEPARTMENT OF TRADE HAS STUDIED THE EFFECTS OF CURRENT AMERICAN LEGISLATION AGAINST THE ARAB BOYCOTT AND THINKS UK SHOULD INTRODUCE SIMILAR LEGISLATION, DEAKINS SAID: "YES, MY DEPARTMENT IS AWARE OF AMERICAN LEGISLATION, BUT WE ARE NOT CERTAIN THAT IF SIMILAR LEGISLATION WERE INTRODUCED IN THIS COUNTRY IT WOULD BE LIKELY TO BE EFFECTIVE OR ADD MUCH TO OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORKING OF THE BOYCOTT. IT WOULD ALSO ADD TO THE ALREADY HEAVY BURDEN OF DOCUMENTATION PLACED ON OUR EXPORTERS. SO FAR AS I AM AWARE, THE EXISTENCE OF THE LEGISLATION DOES NOT PREVENT AMERICAN EXPORTERS FROM PROVIDING BOYCOTT DECLARATIONS."

RICHARDSON

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